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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cal Poly President's Semester Task Force Recommends Maintaining Quarter System

SAN LUIS OBISPO – A task force charged with examining whether Cal Poly should convert to a semester calendar is recommending that the university remain on its current quarter system.

In a report released today, the task force said it “did not find significant evidence that a conversion to semesters would result in improved student outcomes.”

While acknowledging that the semester calendar has some advantages, “the cost, stress, and negative impact of conversion outweigh the merits,” the committee wrote in its executive summary. The task force estimated it would cost at least \$18 million for conversion, which would occur over multiple years.

President Jeffrey D. Armstrong, who appointed the task force in September and charged it with investigating what would be involved in switching to semesters, thanked the task force for its “very thorough and thoughtful approach.”

“This report is an excellent catalyst for deeper conversations on campus about how to improve our curriculum,” Armstrong said. “We already have learned much about ourselves and our views of our curriculum, and I’m pleased that the report expresses enthusiasm for finding ways to continuously improve our curriculum and staying ahead of the curve. Continuous improvement is the key to sustaining excellence.

“That desire to improve is consistent with what students, faculty and staff have expressed anecdotally to me since I began as president two years ago. I am very encouraged that the campus believes we can maintain an innovative edge regardless of what calendar system we use.”

Armstrong initiated the task force in part because the California State University system has been looking at establishing semesters as the common calendar for all 23 CSU campuses. Currently, Cal Poly is one of six CSU campuses on quarters. Nearly 90 percent of American public universities are on semesters, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, while most of the campuses in the University of California system are on quarters.

The committee’s report is one step in the review process. Armstrong has asked the Cal Poly Academic Senate and the Associated Students, Inc., Board of Directors to review the committee’s report in January. In addition, he has scheduled two open forums in January so that all students, faculty and staff can comment on the report.

Following those reviews and discussions, Armstrong expects to make his recommendation to the CSU by the end of the winter quarter. A final decision about conversion rests with the CSU.

“I want to be sure to underscore that any changes to the calendar or curriculum would be done with one objective: to strengthen Learn by Doing,” Armstrong said. “More than a trademark, Learn by Doing is what truly differentiates Cal Poly, and it has been an indispensable factor in our students’ success since Cal Poly was first founded.”

The full report and Armstrong’s note to the campus is available at <http://president.calpoly.edu/semesterreview/>.



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